

ward Island? What rapid strides has it made towards the regeneration of our systems in this little Mistress of the Gulf? But I know your answer will be, "The fault is not to be attributed to the 'Press,' but to the paltry conductors thereof." Granted—But, since it has been said that "the schoolmaster is abroad," and faith it appears he has found his way to Prince Edward Island; yes, to the press of P. E. Island—Yes Sir, I repeat it again, to the press of P. E. Island. When we see a newspaper that has been since its very commencement, the tool of a Party always subject to the spovers that be," (let the cap fit where it may.) I say Sir, when we see this paper assume such a formidable position as to arraign in its columns, seventeen 'wise men' and a fool, that we may justly conclude the schoolmaster has at length arrived, and laid hold on the helm of that "Mighty engine." And for what are those sages arraigned? because forsooth "one fool" has been found to give them a "feed!"

Now, Mr. White, the next thing I hope to hear of, is, that some troublesome fellow or other in the shape of a "schoolmaster," shall have found his way to the office of the 'BRITISH AMERICAN.' Such a thing cannot be surprising, as it was on liberal and independent principles that your valuable journal was established.

Now Sir, I cannot help thinking, that public men are public property, particularly while such are paid out of the public purse. On such data as this, I consider the public have a right—yes, an undoubted right, to scrutinize the measures of all public bodies, however elevated their position may be, or however far their privileges extend.

Well Mr. Editor, what next? here our Honorable Body of Legislators have been in active employment labouring for the welfare of the state for nearly a month past, without we ever hearing a single observation or comment on their proceedings. Can this be right? No Sir, it cannot. That honourable body would be doubly stimulated in their arduous duties, by your giving merit its due. By holding up to the public gaze the 'threadbare' arguments of some, and giving expression to public opinion; it would work wonders in favor of the constituency of Prince Edward Island.—See that arch chap Joe Howe, during the session of the Legislature in Halifax, he is in every 'hole and corner.' Nay, even when the subject of Pay came before that honourable and august Assembly, Joe sent one of his 'Devils' rolled in his 'cloak of darkness,' and reported the division in the very next 'Novascotian.'

Now, Mr. Editor, if you are not yet provided with a 'Devil,' you can no doubt find one in Charlotte-Town, and if not, you must send for one to Novascotia. At all events, whether you send the 'Devil' or

'Doctor Faustis,' you must give us a sketch of our Parliamentary affairs once in a while. I am sorry I live out of town or I would give you a report now and then.—But I shall with your permission, Sir, send you my opinions occasionally, on different subjects connected with the interests of the people; and in the meantime remain

your Obt. Servant,
BARBER.

Green-Bush Cottage, Jan. 31.

CONDITION OF CONVICTS IN VAN DIEMAN'S LAND.

Van Dieman's Land being a penal station for the reception of offenders from Great Britain, it may perhaps be expected that a portion of these pages should be allotted to a subject which is very imperfectly understood at home, although of very considerable importance. It may be well, therefore, to devote a small space towards making known a few of the leading principles under which the convict population is governed. There are two leading heads connected with this subject—the one, the general state or condition of crown prisoners, and the other, the incentives to good conduct which are presented to them, by the indulgences to which they are admissible. Upon the first point, it may be remarked, that all persons who are transported thither, without reference to any previous circumstances whatever, are either placed in the public service, or are assigned to private individuals immediately upon landing, according to their several qualifications. Those who belong to the first class are compelled to devote the whole of their time to such occupations as are allotted to them; and in return, are fed, clothed, and lodged at the expense of the Crown. All mechanics and labourers reside in barracks, built expressly for the occasion; but those who are employed as clerks to any of the public offices, are permitted to live elsewhere, and receive an annual pittance, varying from £10 to £18 per annum, together with a small sum for clothing. The regulations in force with respect to the whole body, and many of which are elsewhere given, effectually render their condition one of unvarying punishment; for they are not allowed to exercise either of time or talents for their own advantage, nor are they suffered to possess property, even if they have friends who would place such at their disposal. Those who are assigned to private families, must be *bona fide* in the service of their masters. They are not allowed to live away from this roof—must not be paid wages—nor work for themselves—can go nowhere without a pass—in fact, although possessing a sort of comparative liberty, are still under the closest control imaginable. The Colonial Laws against harbouring prisoners are extremely severe; visiting with heavy fines all transgressors; and to which persons may very innocently render themselves liable, so various and comprehensive are the enactments. It is only within the last three or four years that the

transportation system, so far as regards the Colony and New South Wales, has assumed that stern and rigid character by which it is now marked; since formerly, there were many channels open, by which much of its severity was capable of being mitigated. Although it has been under Colonel Auther's government that the restrictions and regulations now in force have been introduced, it is generally believed that 'orders from home,' rather than his own natural disposition, have been the cause; for he has generally been remarked to have greater pleasure in lessening, than in aggravating, human misery, and although strict in enforcing obedience—unrelenting in the punishment of hardened offenders—and capable of turning a deaf ear, even to a well told tale, that has not a good cause in its support—yet, the indiscriminate line of treatment now pursued to all Crown prisoners is rather attributed to others, whose hands the governor is a mere instrument, than to himself. In many respects however, the regulations that have been adopted are very excellent, and have had the best and most wholesome effect, not only on the convict population generally, but on many of the free inhabitants. The state of persons who are sent thither for their offences should be one of punishment. They have no right to expect otherwise; nor would it be advisable that they should ever be led to think differently; yet that which is misery to one man, is thought nothing of by another, and it is the indiscriminating, undeviating course that is now pursued, not the system itself, that is thought not to belong to Colonel Auther. It is easy enough for people, sixteen thousand miles distant, to legislate; but a discretion, and a great one too, should always be vested in the hands of the local authorities.

With regard to the second part of this subject, or the indulgences that are open to prisoners of the Crown, as a reward for good conduct, they are principally, tickets of leave, by which the holder is free from compulsory labour and emancipations, which restore freedom, so far as regards the Colony, but do not permit the individual to leave it. But there are other intermediate steps which may be considered to partake of the nature of indulgences, such as situations in the police; that are only conferred upon persons of good character, but which open the road, at the end of a given period, to certain and considerable advantages. The fixed rule with regard to indulgence is, undeviating good conduct, and length of service. Persons who are transported for seven years, must have resided four in the Colony, before they are admissible to a ticket of leave—for fourteen, six—for life, eight. Emancipations may be hoped for, by fourteen years' men, at the end of two thirds of their sentence, by those who are for life, after having been here twelve years; but one single act that shall have brought the individual before a Magistrate, so as to have a record of misbehaviour against his name, no matter how